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## ***ASTRAGALUS ARETIOIDES*** **SWEETWATER MILKVETCH**

Sweetwater Milkvech is a long-lived perennial with short, profusely branching stems that form mounded cushions that are 10-30 cm in diameter. Leaves are pinnately compound, 6-15 mm long and have 3 narrowly lance-shaped leaflets and a prominent papery sheath around the petiole where it meets the stem. Foliage is densely covered with silky hairs. Pea-like, magenta flowers are paired on short stems among the leaves. The upper petal is 6-8 mm long and partly reflexed upwardly. The calyx is 3-4 mm long. Fruit pods are narrowly egg-shaped, 4-5 mm long, densely silky and hairy, and are usually hidden among the leaves. Flowering mid June-mid July; prolonged into August under some conditions.

The combination of purple flowers and a calyx less than 5 mm long separate *ASTRAGALUS ARETIOIDES* from other cushion-forming 3-leaflet species in our area including *A. BARRII*, *A. GILVIFLORUS*, and *A. HYALINUS*.